TOK ESSAY OUTLINE

Okay, there are already resources online for this, but honestly, those really do lack explanation so here is my example.

# Chose Your Title

Now before you say to yourself, all the titles are equally dumb, boring and stupid, WAIT. Let me tell you that the IB has a method to their madness. Title 1 and 2 are usually very though provoking, title 3 is a wild card, title 4 is kind of a wild card, and then title 5 and 6 are usually very easy. For example, the may 2020 knowledge questions. Or even your own, this pattern is generally constant.

# Write 5 knowledge questions from the title

Now there is some controversy here, some teachers allow you to rephrase the title, some do not. Ultimately, since TOK is marked by your teacher you should follow their instructions. But according to the IB, and TOK guides and books, you should not rephrase the prescribed title because it is not your own knowledge question. Now if you need help with writing knowledge questions, I have a link to that over here <a> PUT LINK HERE</a>.

# Write out one main knowledge question you want to analyze for the entire essay.

This is kind of also really important, and I know some of you may not have read that knowledge question link so I will put a TL; DR right here. Essentially what you want for your main knowledge question is two AOKs along with a TOK concept of truth, belief, or some other TOK concept along with a question word. That’s the TL; DR but honestly please visit that knowledge question link that fully explains what you must do.

# Write out two side knowledge questions you want to analyze for the two parts of the essay.

To write the two side knowledge questions, please visit that knowledge question link. But again, a TL; DR. Essentially, because you used two AOKs in the main knowledge question, you can split that apart and talk about each AOK separately. And once again you use a TOK concept, preferably different but similar to your main knowledge question. For example, in your main knowledge question, you could try to talk about truth in science and the arts. But in the secondary knowledge question you talk about certainty in science. Certainty, is not truth, but the two are closely related. And for the arts you could talk about verification or the methodology used to create true artistic knowledge, again verification or methodology is not the same thing is truth, but it is related.

# Write out a claim and counterclaim, and a rebuttal to the counterclaim for both side knowledge questions.

Now this is TOK knowledge analysis, I have a separate link to that as well, but essentially this is where you straight up answer the TOK question, simply and clearly. Lots of kids lose marks because they are not simple nor clear. Write as much as you like this is still the outlining phase. When you write you can shorten everything later, but right now you need some ideas.

# Now using your side knowledge claims, combine them to answer your main knowledge question.

This step should not be hard, in fact, this is simply adding 1+1 together. If you related derived two knowledge questions from the prescribed title. And then answered them by making two very clear and laid out knowledge claims. In theory, you should be able to make a clear knowledge claim that answers your main question. But that is theory, and this is theory of knowledge 😉

# EH CONGRATULATIONS, it’s a CELEBRATION, If YOU followed the steps above you have a pretty solid draft a TOK essay outline. Now the structure. Putting amazing outline + solid structure together will, hopefully get you an 8, 9 and maybe a 10 on your essay.

TOK ESSAY STRUCUTRE

Paragraph 1

Introduction, how did you get the main knowledge question from the prescribed title, whatever that may be. Make sure to include the actual title wording into your intro. You need not put the entire title inside of it. Just as much as you can, like three or four words, as a quote should be enough. By the end of your intro you should have said your main knowledge question and you must state your answer to that knowledge question in the intro. Think of your title as a bad question you attempt to refine and your thesis as the main knowledge question.

Paragraph 2

Jump straight into the first main knowledge question, one sentence max for a transition, go straight into the question and then the analysis and main knowledge claim.

Paragraph 3

The counter claim for the claim

Paragraph 4

Rebuttal, preferably 50-100 words, and this doesn’t require as much analysis, but its wording should be extremely concise and particular to disprove your counterclaim.

Paragraph 5

Same thing as para 2, just with the second knowledge question and claim.

Paragraph 6

Second counterclaim

Paragraph 7

Second rebuttal

Paragraph 8

Conclusion, this is where you state your main knowledge claim, along with its respective analysis and explanation. This should also make reference to the two side knowledge claims up above. Albeit, you do not need to make reference to them, it does increase your mark as the essay becomes more clear and well-structured by being linked together.

Paragraph 9

Extensions/ Implications: This section is really important as it is the metaphorical wrapping on your present. Without this you will most likely get a 6 or 7, maybe an 8/10. Essentially what you do here is apply your conclusion into different AOKs. You use the main knowledge claim in different AOKs, one, maybe two different AOKs from the ones you used thorough your essay.

# How do you know this essay outline will work?

I used it for my essay (9/10), and this essay outline and structure is an agglomeration of multiple sources and TOK websites that I looked at.

# How to score well on the TOK essay

There is only one way to score really well. Ensure that every sentence can place itself on the (left) 10/10 side of the rubric regardless of what you say. Here I will in part explain the TOK essay rubric, a sort of TOK Essay rubric explained section.

## There is a sustained focus on knowledge questions connect to the prescribed title

This must be straight forward, just keep trying to answer the knowledge question and everything you say must have some purpose to answer or resolve the knowledge question. For example, lets say I have this knowledge question. To **what extent does the arts as an AOK rely on the WOK reason?** And I want to start talking about how there is reason in the arts. But if I start talking about Albert Einstein, or start talking about imagination, I have a problem. I can talk about something different in my counterclaim. There I can talk about imagination and Einstein. But then I should show how those two things are useless in providing any answer to the claim.

## Knowledge questions connect to the prescribed title and are well chosen-

This is not as straight as it sounds, this is the famous IB word play going on. Here they except three things, but expressed as one. The intro. YOUR INTRO MUST BE GOOD. Now that begs the question, how do you make a clear intro? You have the following items in your intro.

* Some piece of text from the question
* A non-BS way of connecting the question to a POKs or some TOK concept (link to TOK concepts)
* A main knowledge question arising from the TOK concept that you identified hiding in the title.
  + Knowledge question must have two AOKs
* A clear statement that answers the main knowledge question.

Well it might have been three or four things but eh, whatever.

### Knowledge questions-developed with investigation of different perspective

This is where the idea of TOK gold comes in. In TOK there are two tiers, and I discuss that here (TOK GOLD LINK) but if you do not want to read that, here is a TL; DR. TOK gold is good TOK analysis and TOK dirt is bad TOK analysis. If you want gold, you need to use gold words. There is a list to this, and honestly, I am scared of putting it up as this is the “mark scheme for TOK”. Below are some examples, this is not a non-exhaustive list. There are more, here are some.

* Df

How does this relate to different perspectives? By putting in these key words, you already begin evaluating different ideas and takes on knowledge. If you talk about a WOK that’s one perspective, a paradigm shift, that’s another. If you talk about a knowledge framework, another one. Bias, another one. You get the point now. In addition, you can also include more philosophical concepts, that always helps in showing you know your stuff. Although I see students get caught up in explaining that concept and leave out the TOK stuff.

*And linked effectively to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing.*

I briefly touched upon this up above but, make sure you talk about how a AOK or WOK is part of the title and your knowledge question. Not much to say here except do not forget them

Second part of the rubric – Quality of analysis of knowledge questions

*Arguments are clear, supported by real-life examples and are effectively evaluated;*

I’m sorry I can’t help with the arguments part, that’s a “you problem”. You need to be clear. But the real-life examples are very important, use CAS and your EE. BS them I don’t care, if you can somehow say that you used TOK in your real life. The examiner will %^&\*. And if your skeptical about this, think about it, teachers should be telling you that TOK has some practical application, show them that you found it by saying in your essay. During the process of completing EE I experienced this problem in attaining knowledge. Or during my CAS project I identified my own bias. Something like that you must get the point.

*Counterclaims are extensively explored*

Again, I touched upon this, it basically means that you must talk about another perspective, another idea that can possibly relate to your main knowledge question.

*Implications are drawn*

This, is what NO BODY DOES. IDK why people don’t do this, its basically you extending answer to your main knowledge question, your main knowledge claim and saying, this is how it applies in 1 or 2 AOKs I didn’t discuss in my entire essay. You’ll have 6 options to choose, this should be the easiest part.

Cogent

Accomplished

Discerning

Individual

Lucid

Insightful

Compelling

Some extra, vague and subjective markers the IB calls 10/10 essays. Although it may be subjective to call something clear and something else not clear. It should be good overall. How do you make it good? Follow this TOK outline guide or reread this page again?

TOK ESSAY EXAMPLES

Here are mine, and a couple of examples, some are good some are bad. Their respective marks are placed near them. You need to know what bad looks like to do good.

# HOW TO GET TOP MARKS FOR THE ESSAY

Honestly, instead of some magical guru text asking for some money. I will like to direct you straight to the TOK essay rubric.

<https://ibpublishing.ibo.org/exist/rest/app/tsm.xql?doc=d_0_tok_gui_1304_1_e&part=3&chapter=4>

This the current link, it may change so… just google it or whatever search engine you use. That’s all for this section. Just read the rubric, know what is good and what is bad, and start writing according to the principles.

# Learn How to Understand Your Title

Understanding your title may be one of the hardest things to do, but this process doesn’t need to be so bad. One thing I ask you to do is to follow all of these techniques as each one offers a different PERSPECTIVE to the entire writing process.

* Technique 1: r/Increasingly Verbose
  + If you ever need a good laugh, go to this reddit. Essentially the premise of this technique is to take your title and stretch it out as much as possible, so that you can move from confusing IB speak to understandable human speak. Here let’s try an example with a May 2020 title.
    - ““Others have seen what is and asked why. I have seen what could be and asked why not” (Pablo Picasso). Explore this distinction with reference to two areas of knowledge.”
      * (Other people have looked at the world and asked why. I have looked at the world and asked what could be.) Explain, explore, delve into the mysteries behind this with reference to two areas of knowledge.
        + (Many human beings on the planet Earth have looked at reality and contemplated its present state. Whereas, I have looked at the same reality and wondered could have been from the present state.) Look around the distinction and provide a clear statement that explains the difference between the two people in two areas of knowledge.
* Technique 2: Take a shower
  + This may sound a bit confusing but taking a shower is very good for getting your creative juices flowing. If you don’t believe me then try it out. It can’t hurt you.
* Technique 3: Come back to it in an hour
  + Now, you might be reading this 2 days before your essay is due and you haven’t started but please, still try taking a small break. You might need to take a break to get a new idea.
* Technique 4: Watch some philosophical YouTube videos. Here is a list of my favourite philosophical YouTube Channels I watched while I wrote my TOK essay.
  + Academy of Ideas – Good English
  + Exub1a – Good Existential vortex
  + Pursuit of Wonder – Both Good English and Existential vortex
  + Freedom of though – Not very philosophical but older content is very good

**Learn About AOKs and WOKs**

*The problem*

In my opinion students do not struggle with understanding what Areas of Knowledge and Ways of Knowing are as a concept. You use AOKs and WOKs on a daily basis (hopefully). What students struggle with is applying the terminology. Below is a list of where you should apply this terminology.

* In a Main knowledge question
* In a secondary knowledge question
* In your TOK analysis
* In your TOK knowledge claims

*The solution*

Use a TOK wheel. I have no clue why this came up in my mind during my years in the IB diploma program but did this ever help me. Essentially, it’s the image below, I made this one myself, so enjoy, use it in your presentation if you really want. Although some credit would be nice.

Picture goes here

Essentially, the point of this TOK wheel is to help you with analysis. The inner most circle is you, the knower. A level above that is how you know or WOKs. Again, one step above, the places to know stuff, so AOKs, and then you have the POKs. Problems of Knowing, the issues the problems, the inhibitors (for all those bio kids out there). I have noticed that good TOK analysis is dealing with the POKs with multiple WOKs in one or two AOKs. Ya, I just used four abbreviations, deal with it.

**Learn How to Write Good Knowledge Questions**

“OMG, it hurts when ever I see people make bad knowledge questions”

That being said, lets get you to understand everything about knowledge questions in a jiffy.

**Main knowledge questions**

* Two areas of knowledge
* One TOK concept (maybe two, although one is enough)
* A question statement like
  + To what extent (TWE)
  + How does
  + To what length
  + Why – tricky questions to answer
* Bad ideas for question statements
  + Although these are bad ideas for questions, I do not discourage the use of them
  + What does
  + Where does
  + Who does
  + Etc.